

Program Overview

The Voluntary Assistance Program (VAP) provides staff consultation, project oversight, and technical or environmental report evaluation and concurrence (when appropriate) on projects pertaining to properties contaminated with hazardous substances. Assistance is customized to meet the needs of the applicant.

The Department of Environmental Health will utilize its experience and knowledge of environmental assessment, cleanup, and risk evaluation to facilitate rapid and cost-effective resolution of soil and groundwater contamination problems.

If a County “closure” letter or "concurrence" letter is desired, the technical information, findings, and recommendations in the reports must demonstrate that human health, water resources, and the environment are adequately protected.

Examples of Review Projects

- Property Phase I and Phase II reports for lenders and potential buyers;
- Phase II environmental assessment workplans, prior to initiating work;
- Planning/Building Department requirements for review of potential contamination impact;
- Release of cleaning solvents from dry cleaning operations;
- Cleanup of fuel, waste oil, and other chemical spills;
- Conversion of gas stations to retail facilities (petroleum contamination); and
- Conversion of agricultural to residential land-use (pesticide concerns).

Brownfields

US-EPA defines Brownfields as abandoned, idled, or underused industrial and commercial facilities where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived hazardous chemical contamination.

The Department of Environmental Health (DEH) can provide regulatory overview or third party concurrence for Brownfield activities.

Site Designation Process

Some environmental cleanup projects can involve several agencies. The CAL-EPA Site Designation Process allows one agency to act as the administering agency with the ability to issue a Certificate of Completion. DEH can serve as the administering agency.

Conditions of Review

- Allow a minimum of 30 days for DEH to review the initial documents.
- DEH may refuse to accept an application for technical or legal reasons.
- The California Department of Toxic Substances Control and the San Diego, Regional Water Quality Control Board will be notified of the review.
- All reports and project files submitted to this program will be available for public review.
- Copies of all DEH correspondence will be forwarded to the legal property owner.
- Reports containing geologic interpretation must be signed by an experienced professional with the appropriate California

registration or certification. See SAM manual.

- Fees are established by the County of San Diego and billing is done quarterly. All bills must be paid within 30 days of issue. The current billing rate is \$119 per hour.
- Staff assistance will not be provided on delinquent accounts.
- Upon satisfactory completion of activities, a "closure" letter or "concurrence" letter will be issued.
- The submitted package should contain all relevant documentation, data, and reports. The most commonly submitted documents are Workplans, Phase I Reports, Phase II Reports, and Health Risk Evaluations. All reports should include data interpretations and recommendations. Thorough documentation results in faster review.
- All work is to be in accordance with applicable regulatory requirements, industry practices, and the current version of the DEH Site Assessment and Mitigation Manual.

How to Apply

The following items must be submitted for DEH to begin the review process:

- **Application Form.** This form allows the applicant(s) to identify their specific project goals. The form should be signed by the property owner or the applicant(s) agreeing to pay for DEH service.
- **Initial Fee.** Include a check for \$238; payable to County of San Diego. This covers the first two hours of work, which typically

includes setting up the project file and initial document review.

An applicant may withdraw from the program through written notification and payment of accrued fees. Other environmental agencies will be notified if significant contamination is present and/or the contamination may pose a threat to public health and safety. The file will remain available for public review.

Environmental Assessment Listing

DEH maintains a list of environmental assessment files that are available for public review. Most files are associated with underground storage tank release investigations. Voluntary Assistance Program files are also included. Inclusion of files on this list does not necessarily mean significant contamination is present.

The list is available on the Internet at:

www.sdcounty.ca.gov/deh/water/docs/caselist.pdf

or

www.sdcdeh.org

A printed list can be purchased by calling:
(619) 338-2239

For Further Information

Voluntary Assistance Program

Nasser Sionit – Program Coordinator

Phone: (619) 338-2239

FAX: (619) 338-2315

[www.sdcounty.ca.gov/deh/waste/contamination.h
tml](http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/deh/waste/contamination.html) (web)

Deh.sam@sdcounty.ca.gov (e-mail)

DEH File Review

(Call for appointment)

Phone: (619) 338-2268

FAX: (619) 338-2377

Deh.publicrecords@sdcounty.ca.gov (web)

Other DEH Services

DEH Duty Specialist

Phone: (619) 338-2222

Site Assessment Duty Specialist

Phone: (619) 338-2246

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Department of Environmental Health
Land and Water Quality Division
Voluntary Assistance Program
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San Diego, CA 92112-9261**

DEH:SAM-9504 (Rev. 07/08)

County of San Diego

**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH
LAND AND WATER QUALITY DIVISION**



Voluntary Assistance Program



**A Voluntary Approach For
Resolution of Environmental
Contamination Problems**